

to her students and her peers. Her continued faith in students has made a tremendous impact on a countless number of lives.

Ms. Bauer began the foundation of her higher education at Elizabethtown College. She later earned her Master's degree from McDaniel College and has since been certified as a cognitive tutor for the countywide algebra curriculum.

She is able to take a complex subject like mathematics and break it down into pieces so students have a better understanding of formulas. She encourages students through a positive learning environment. Ms. Bauer introduces students to creativity in the classroom; students learn the Quadratic formula to the tune of "Pop Goes the Weasel," and practice math problems through group activities.

Ms. Bauer has made it a point to actively participate in school activities. She is a co-advisor to the National Honor Society; a member of the school Improvement Team; the Mariner Varsity Softball Coach; a member of the school Advisory Committee; and she volunteers at various athletic events. In addition to these contributions, she also organized a students vs. faculty basketball game to raise funds for the Johns Hopkins Research Hospital for Kidney Research after sisters, and former Joppatowne students, Amanda and Abby Gilland, died within a year of each other from a rare kidney disease.

Her hard work and dedication have not gone unnoticed. Ms. Bauer was named Teacher of the Month twice. She was nominated seven times to the list of "Who's Who Among High School Students," and she was voted as the school's "Most Spirited Teacher" for four years.

Ms. Bauer sets high expectations, but attainable goals for her students. She provides them with academic and social guidance. She is convinced all students can be successful in life if only someone believes in them. This is a woman with one goal in mind: to equip young people with the skills and knowledge they require to be productive, successful members of society.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that you join with me in thanking Ms. Kerrie Bauer for providing her students with the support, confidence, courage and knowledge they need in today's society.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

HON. JANE HARMAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2006

Ms. HARMAN. Mr. Speaker, last year, the Intelligence Community made painful decisions about the architecture of our satellite programs. These were hard choices. We have worked carefully to mitigate the damage and retain the capability. The future depends on assuring that our decisions are implemented well. That requires a talented and motivated workforce—both military and civilian.

The legislation being introduced today requires the Air Force to study the impact of proposed personnel cuts on our space programs.

The bill's sponsors believe that the cuts mandated by the Quadrennial Defense Review could have an enormous impact on the space community, particularly the intellectual talent

that gives us the edge over our adversaries and that we have worked so hard to build up over the past decade.

Allowing the Air Force to gut its personnel—both Active Duty and contractor support—without the benefit of an impact statement could undercut the careful measures we took to preserve and protect the industrial base.

The Department of Defense comptroller has directed the Air Force to "aggressively reduce contractor support." This is a very dangerous path. Contractors have formed the core of our rebuilt space capability after we literally dropped billions of dollars of research and hardware into the ocean in the 1990s.

While active duty members often are forced to rotate out of the command due to the pressing needs of the service, the contractor community has provided much of the intellectual capacity, stability, and continuity to keep our programs on track.

Today, the Space and Missiles Command, located in El Segundo, California, in my Congressional district, has a record of which everyone is proud—45 successful launches, including 12 Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicles. We dare not put that record in jeopardy by releasing one-third of our brain trust.

This desire for continuity is also reflected in the Intelligence Committee's report accompanying the FY 2007 Authorization bill, which passed the full House last month. In it, our Committee wrote: "Simply put, complex space systems acquisition requires extraordinary specialized knowledge, skills, and dedicated effort over time."

For that very reason, Congress has a right—and a responsibility—to understand the impact of these cuts and be assured that our capability will not be further eroded in the face of pressing national security challenges.

I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

PALESTINIAN ANTI-TERRORISM ACT OF 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. TAMMY BALDWIN

OF WISCONSIN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, May 22, 2006

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. Speaker, this week I made a very difficult decision in voting for H.R. 4681, the Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act of 2006. I have been deeply moved by my constituents from both sides of the issue, including individuals with strong family ties to the Middle East. I want to take this opportunity to share my thoughts behind voting in support of the legislation.

In January 2006, Hamas, a designated terrorist organization that does not recognize the state of Israel and calls for an Islamized Palestinian state, won the legislative election to lead the PA government. Since then, the United States and the European Union have announced a series of measures designed to further isolate and pressure the Hamas-led Palestinian government until it recognizes Israel, renounces violence, and accepts previously signed Israeli-Palestinian peace agreements.

Specifically, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice recently announced that the United States has begun to suspend over \$400 mil-

lion in direct aid to Hamas, while redirecting about \$100 million from canceled projects to humanitarian assistance such as food and medicine distributed by non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The canceled aid includes: \$45 million in direct aid to the PA; \$130 million in infrastructure projects; \$20 million in private enterprise development and revitalization, financial markets reform, trade programs and information technology sector support; \$17 million in electoral, political party, local government and legislative support programs; \$13 million in civil society development; \$10 million in rule of law and judicial programs; \$7 million in technical assistance and vocational training; \$4 million in community policing, among others. Similarly, the EU Commission announced that it had halted payments to the Hamas government, freezing all direct aid to the PA and payment of public employees' salaries with EU funds through the World Bank, but not humanitarian aid through international and nongovernmental organizations. In the mean time, the Israeli government has cut off all ties with nearly all branches of the PA government, including its security. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has declared that his government will avoid meetings with visiting representatives or diplomats from PA.

I am in support of certain financial sanctions on Hamas to ensure no U.S. government funding goes directly to support terrorism activities. On February 15, 2006, I voted in favor of, and the House passed, S. Con. Res. 76, which expressed the sense of Congress that no United States assistance should be provided directly to the PA if the majority party in control of the PA parliament maintains a position calling for the destruction of Israel. I believe it was a sensible resolution that called for an end of U.S. financial support of Hamas while allowing other forms of humanitarian aid to flow through NGOs to the Palestinian people.

The impact of cuts in aid is being felt by the PA. Omar Abdel-Razeq, Finance Minister of the PA, recently confirmed that the PA could not pay March and April salaries to about 140,000 government workers. These salaries support about one-third of the Palestinian population. These cuts in aid came on top of the fact that Gaza's economy is in dire straits, with average family income already below the U.N. poverty line. Economic conditions are also precipitously declining in the West Bank. Overall the PA shoulders a total debt of \$1.3 billion, including \$640 million to regional and local banks and making it virtually impossible for the PA to obtain new loans. Furthermore, Israel has decided to withhold \$50 million a month in customs and tax receipts since January, although it continues to pay Israeli companies about \$5.5 million a month from those receipts for the water and electricity used by the Palestinians. The Israeli government has also recently announced that it will buy drugs and medical equipments needed by Palestinian hospitals in Gaza out of the withheld funds.

Yet, despite the dire needs of Palestinians, Hamas has chosen to ignore reality in favor of its extremist commitment to terrorism.

On April 17 of this year, a suicide bomber struck in a Tel Aviv restaurant, killing nine Israelis and injured dozens. The suicide bombing was carried out by Islamic Jihad, an Iranian-backed extremist group that refuses to acknowledge the cease-fire followed by

Hamas. The Passover attack was a grotesque display of terrorism and violence, yet it was quickly defended by Hamas. Sami Abu Zuhri, the official spokesman for Hamas, stated at the time that the attack was "a natural result of the continued Israeli crimes" against Palestinians and that "our people are in a state of self-defense and they have every right to use all means to defend themselves." It became clear to me that, without regards to the pressing needs of the Palestinian people, Hamas was ready to ignore its own cease-fire policy in favor of extremist political rhetoric that further isolate and weaken the PA and endangers the humanitarian situation of the Palestinian people. It was a chilling reminder of Hamas' tendency to favor violence over peace and political posturing over progress, all at the expense of Palestinian people's welfare.

The Passover bombing and the Hamas response to the bombing was a turning point in my consideration and analysis of H.R. 4681, the Palestinian Anti-Terrorism Act of 2006. I believe that a stronger message must be sent by the United States to Hamas that we will not support a government that continues to embrace terrorism. H.R. 4681 is an appropriate vehicle to send that message. The bill intensifies the pressure placed on the Hamas-led PA by not only restricting direct U.S. aid to the PA (which has already been suspended by Secretary Rice), but also restricting U.S. assistance to NGOs working in the West Bank and Gaza, subject to exceptions based on humanitarian needs. It expresses the sense of Congress that PA-controlled territories should be deemed as terrorist sanctuaries; denies visas to any PA officials or affiliated persons; and restricts the travel of any PA representative to the UN outside of a 25-mile radius of the U.N. headquarters building in New York City. Finally, the bill directs the President to prohibit international financial institutions from directly assisting a Hamas-led PA, and prohibits any U.S. officer or employee from having any official contacts with members or official representatives of Hamas.

In examining H.R. 4681 leading up to the vote, the bill had raised several significant questions for me: Is additional financial and political isolation the most effective means to induce changes to Hamas policy towards Israel? Will such noose-tightening prompt the Palestinian people to insist that Hamas change its policy or will it inadvertently lead to humanitarian crisis and civil unrest in the West Bank and Gaza? Will political and financial sanctions firmly aimed at Hamas serve to strengthen the role of Mahmoud Abbas, the moderate President of the PA or further radicalize Hamas while undermining the position of President Mahmoud Abbas? While these are difficult questions with which to wrestle, I eventually decided that H.R. 4681 sends an important and necessary message to PA that the United States will not tolerate a terrorist-controlled government's role in obstructing the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

First, I believe H.R. 4681 provides the United States the additional leverage it needs to push Hamas toward the acceptance of Israel and the rejection of violence. The Act amends the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) by adding a new section prohibiting direct financial transfers by the United States to the PA until the President certifies that no part of the PA is controlled by a foreign terrorist organization (FTO) designated by the United States

and Europe and no member of an FTO serves in a senior policy making position in the PA, the PA has publicly acknowledged Israel's right to exist and recommitted itself to previous agreements and understandings with Israel and the United States, and the PA has taken effective steps and made progress toward a number of objectives including purging its security services of individuals with ties to terrorists, dismantling terrorist infrastructure, and halting anti-Israeli incitement. I believe these are reasonable and necessary benchmarks that Hamas must make in order to demonstrate its capability to be a responsible government.

Furthermore, I believe the bill's humanitarian provisions address my concern that the increased sanctions advocated by the legislation would unnecessarily hurt the Palestinian people. Make no mistake, I do not believe that the Palestinian people should be punished for exercising their right to elect the representatives of their choice. In March 2005, Hamas accepted a temporary cease-fire with Israel in exchange for Abbas' agreement to allow the group into PA's electoral system. Throughout the process, the Bush Administration stood on the sidelines, assuming that Hamas' political participation would either transform the group or marginalize it. Indeed, Secretary Rice stated last fall that the United States had "to give the Palestinians some room for the evolution of their political process." As a result, Hamas entered the field for the 2006 legislative elections. Understanding the widespread public dissatisfaction with the PA's corruption under the control of the Fatah party and the sour economy, Hamas ran on a platform of clean governance and reform, rather than ideology. Subsequently, observers widely agree that Hamas was democratically elected by the Palestinian people not for its ideological platform, but for its practical appeal in improving the day-to-day living conditions of Palestinians.

I strongly believe Palestinians should not be punished for exercising their Democratic choice in electing their representatives. Yet, with nearly 50 percent of the PA's residents living below the poverty line, unemployment on the rise, and government salaries already not being paid, Hamas' ongoing pursuit of extremist rhetoric demonstrates to me the party's inability to put the interests of the Palestinian people above its terrorist ideology and its unwillingness to govern in a responsible manner. I believe H.R. 4681, which provides an exception to the restrictions for basic human needs such as food, water, medicine, and sanitation services and allows the President to provide other targeted democracy or rule of law assistance, strikes a balance in both pressuring Hamas but also ensuring that necessary assistance reaches the Palestinian people in Gaza and the West Bank.

Finally, I believe the approach of economic and diplomatic isolation of Hamas will help strengthen the position of PA President Mahmoud Abbas and lead to the creation of pragmatic, reform-minded activists and parties. H.R. 4681 has been amended to allow for exceptions to the ban on direct assistance permitting the United States to maintain an open dialogue with President Abbas. It allows the president to use a national security waiver to provide assistance to the office of the PA president for non-security expenses directly related to facilitating a peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or for the per-

sonal security detail of the PA president. Emboldened by U.S. and Israeli opposition to Hamas, Abbas recently announced that it will call a national referendum on accepting a Palestinian state alongside Israel that would implicitly recognize Israel's right to exist. Abbas is ready and willing to demonstrate to the international community that there is a Palestinian partner for negotiations with Israel, and the United States should seize this opportunity to continue press for a breakthrough in long-stalled peace efforts.

I sincerely hope that H.R. 4681 will play a constructive role to secure permanent peace in the Middle East.

THE IDENTITY THEFT PROTECTION FOR THE DECEASED ACT

HON. SUSAN A. DAVIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 25, 2006

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address a horrible form of identity theft.

We have heard plenty lately about the need to take swift action to prevent this serious crime. Just this month, one of the largest data security breaches in history occurred when the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) lost the names, Social Security Numbers, and the dates of birth of over 26 million Americans. We hear a lot about security breaches and the identity theft of living Americans. One aspect of the crime you do not always hear about is the misuse of personal information of deceased Americans.

This is a serious issue for many reasons. For one, it is their loved ones who pay the price. Months or even years after a family member passes away, surviving spouses or other relatives will begin to receive credit card bills or even phone calls from bill collectors. A predator can go onto certain websites and purchase Social Security Numbers that are sold for purposes of tracking family histories and genealogy. The predator then uses the Social Security Number to apply for credit cards, loans, and other forms of consumer credit.

There were even reports that a predator was misusing the personal information of a New York resident who died in the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. In another case, a woman began to receive bills addressed to her daughter who had passed away 17 years before.

In my hometown of San Diego just recently, the local news media shed light on another unfortunate case. A predator took information on a woman published in an obituary and used it for identity theft crimes. It was up to her son to repair the damage and put an end to the abuse. I cannot imagine the emotional toll these cases must take on surviving relatives, and I rise today to take action to prevent further cases of this crime.

It is time Congress acted to block this form of identity theft from continuing. Predators can collect this information with relative ease giving them a study supply of Social Security Numbers, dates of birth, and the information they need to commit these horrible crimes. Furthermore, this form of identity theft can ruin the good names and pristine credit histories of